

Special Education – Personnel Preparation Program

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Department is working to develop reliable and systematic ways to understand the effects of activities supported through the Personnel Preparation program. While State-reported data provide critical insights into the overall conditions in the market for special educators, such data do not shed much light on the effectiveness of particular personnel or training programs. Unfortunately, relatively little is known about the overall effectiveness of the Personnel Preparation program.

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2013 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To prepare service providers and leadership personnel in areas of critical need who are highly qualified to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

Objective 1: Improve the curricula of IDEA training programs to ensure that personnel preparing to serve children with disabilities are knowledgeable and skilled in practices that reflect the current knowledge base.

Objective 2: Increase the supply of teachers and service providers who are highly qualified for and serve in positions for which they are trained.

Objective 3: Enhance the efficiency of the expenditure of Federal dollars under the program.

Long-Term Performance Measures

The program has two long-term measures that are designed to provide information on the quality of the program by looking at the skills of scholars supported using program funds.

Measure: Percentage of degree/certification recipients who maintain employment for 3 or more years in the area(s) for which they were trained and who are fully qualified under IDEA.

Year	Target	Actual
2008		91
2009	91	65
2010	93	
2011	95	
2012	35	
2013	35	

Additional Information: Through 2009, the Department collected data for this measure using a temporary collection methodology that involved surveying a small sample of the largest IHEs that receive program funds to support student training. This measure was calculated by dividing the total number of degree recipients from the 9 largest grantees that, according to those institutions, maintained employment for 3 years in the area(s) for which they were trained and who are highly qualified by the total number of degree recipients who graduated in any single year from those programs. For example, for 2009 the numerator is the total number of degree recipients who received degrees in 2004, maintained employment for 3 or more years in the area for which they were trained, and who are fully qualified under IDEA (n=280), and the denominator is the total number of degree recipients graduating from these 9 institutions in 2004 (n=431). Because these data were collected from only 9 grantees, they are not comparable to the data presented in the other program performance measures.

Beginning in 2010, the Department began obtaining data from all currently funded program grantees through the National Center for Service Obligation (NCSO). NCSO is the Office of Special Education Programs(OSEP)-supported contractor that tracks scholars post-graduation to determine whether they comply with the program's service obligation requirement. NCSO began tracking graduates from institutions receiving grants in FY 2005, shortly after the Department assumed responsibility for this task under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (P.L. 108-446). However, because the NCSO did not have data on 2005 graduates eligible for inclusion in this measure, data available for 2010 may not have been an accurate representation of the actual proportion of scholars who maintain employment for 3 or more years in the area for which they were trained.

Ideally, the Department would calculate this measure by determining the total number of scholars who had completed 3 or more years of acceptable service within 5 years of their graduation. However, because NCSO does not have data on 2005 graduates eligible for inclusion in this measure, the Department calculated the 2010 measure using the percentage of 2006 graduates completing 3 or more years of service by the time of collection. As such, graduates had only 4 years to complete the 3 years of service as opposed to the 5-year window used in prior data collection cycles and in 2011. For 2010, no graduates reported having maintained employment for 3 or more years within the 4-year period and only one graduate reported having at least a 3-year service obligation, but data were not available for 154 graduates.

For 2011, data reported to NCSO indicated that 2 percent of the program graduates maintained acceptable employment for 3 or more years in the area for which they were trained and were fully qualified under IDEA. This measure was calculated by dividing the number of degree recipients who have reported to NCSO that they have maintained 3 or more years of acceptable employment in the areas for which they were trained and are fully qualified under IDEA (n=1) by the total number of degree recipients in 2006 who had service obligations of at least 3 years in length – including those who reported 3 or more years of acceptable service (n=1), those who reported less than 3 years of acceptable service (n=1), those who reported no acceptable service (n=0), and those for whom no data are available (n=42).

The Department believes that the data for 2011 underestimate actual performance on this measure given performance on other measures for this program (e.g. percent of graduates working in the field for which they were trained and are highly qualified under the IDEA), the small number of graduates eligible to be included in this measure, and the fact that project directors did not report any data for 19 percent of 2006 completers. From Annual Performance Report data, the Department has determined that 73 percent of the 2,232 program completers from 2006 were working in the area for which they were trained upon program completion, and the Department believes it is highly unlikely that such a large percentage of graduates would fail to maintain employment for 3 or more years. Additionally, given that 2011 estimates are based on 2006 program completers and fiscal year 2005 grantees were the first whose program completers were tracked by the Department, there are only a small number who actually have service obligations of at least 3 years (approximately 1 percent of the 181 completers who had data reported to NCSO). Additionally, given that the NCSO system was not able to collect data on program graduates until fiscal year 2008, there were a number of program completers in fiscal year 2006 who did not have any data in the Service Obligation Tracking System (approximately 19 percent of the 223 completers).

Measure: Percentage of scholars completing Special Education Personnel Preparation funded training programs who are knowledgeable and skilled in evidence-based practices for children with disabilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	49	40
2009	45	85
2010	48	
2011	51	
2012	85	
2013	85	

Additional Information: Grantees submit data annually through the Department Personnel Preparation Data Report (PPD) Web-based data collection (see: <http://www.oseppdp.ed.gov>). This measure presents information on the percentage of scholars completing programs who passed an independent exam, such as the Praxis II, that is designed to assess the knowledge and skills of special educators. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of scholars who graduated in a given year and pass an exam demonstrating knowledge and skills in evidence-based practices for children with disabilities (2,255 students in fiscal year 2009) by the total number of students who completed training programs – including students who passed a test (2,255 students), students who did not pass a test (30 students), students who did not take a test (171 students), students for whom grantees did not know if they took a test (34 students), and students for whom test data was missing (165 students).

The Department does not currently require IHEs receiving program funds to use an independent assessment to assess the knowledge and skills of individuals graduating from institutions supported with program funds. Historically, actual data and targets for this measure have been unusually low because, while all scholars receiving program funds are included in the denominator, a substantial number of those scholars (approximately 908 out of 2,712, or 33 percent, in fiscal year 2008) did not participate in independent assessments according to grantees. While these scholars attend programs at IHEs located in States that did not require graduates to pass an independent assessment to measure the knowledge and skills of graduates, the Department has worked closely with grantees to improve data collection on graduates who take other, non-required assessments and to ensure that data on non-standardized measures of knowledge and skills are reported by grantees (such as an oral examination administered by faculty at the IHE).

Annual Performance Measures

The program has five annual performance measures. All five of these measures are designed to provide information on various aspects of program quality, including scholars who receive funding through the program.

While several years of data have been collected for most of these annual measures, the Department recently recalculated all years of actual performance to ensure that the appropriate

subcategories of “unknowns” were included in the denominators. In most cases, because the actual data changed substantially, new targets also had to be established. These measures are:

Measure: Percentage of projects that incorporate scientifically- or evidence-based practices in their curricula.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	60	49
2009	65	91
2010	80	100
2011	90	
2012	95	
2013	95	

Additional Information: Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor using a panel of 7 experts, who review a randomly selected sample of 50 percent of grantee course syllabi submitted by funded applicants in the same cohort of grantees. Syllabi, which are taken from grantee applications, are reviewed for the inclusion of between 5 and 7 scientifically- or evidence-based practices in key target areas that have been identified by the Department as critical for all projects -- including assessment, behavior, inclusive practices, instructional strategies, literacy, transition, and early childhood, as appropriate. The score for every individual syllabus is the sum of the evidence-based practices observable in that syllabus. In order to meet the standard for incorporating evidence-based practices, all evidence-based practice areas reviewed must be identifiable in the syllabus.

In the fiscal year 2011 review, 36 syllabi from fiscal year 2010 grantees were included from the following types of projects: early childhood (6 syllabi scored), leadership (11 syllabi scored), low incidence (5 syllabi scored), minority institutions (5 syllabi scored), secondary transition (3 syllabi scored) and program improvement (6 syllabi scored).

The dramatic increase in performance under this measure is due, in part, to a concerted effort by the Department both to ensure adequate technical assistance to grantees and sufficient instructions to reviewers. In 2010 and 2011, the Department provided substantial guidance to reviewers to assist them in systematic evaluation of the curricula to ensure that all evidence-based practices were recognized and properly credited. Additionally, the Department worked closely with grantees to ensure that syllabi were properly updated and reflected the most current practice and evidence base used in their courses.

The Department will continue to provide technical assistance to grantees regarding the incorporation of evidence-based practices into their syllabi and to reviewers regarding the evaluation process. Should this marked increase in performance continue, the Department will revisit targets for this measure to more accurately reflect the new baseline that has been established.

Measure: Percentage of scholars who exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	0.99	1.6
2009	1.9	2.0
2010	1.9	
2011	1.9	
2012	1.9	
2013	1.9	

Additional Information: Grantees submit data annually through the Department Personnel Preparation Data Report (PPD) Web-based data collection (see: <http://www.oseppdp.ed.gov>).

No calculation is necessary. The data are taken directly from the PPD data collection.

Approximately 2.0 percent of all scholars receiving program funds exited their training programs early due to poor academic performance in 2009, up from 1.4 percent in 2007 and 1.6 percent in 2008. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of scholars exiting their training program in fiscal year 2009 due to poor academic performance (n=66) and dividing it by the total number of scholars completing a training program in fiscal year 2009 (n=2,678) and the number of scholars exiting their training program prior to completion for any reason (n=701).

A low number of scholars exiting their training programs early could reflect either a strong recruitment effort by IHEs to ensure high quality students receive Federal scholarship funds or a strong student support network in programs receiving Federal funds. While there is still room for improvement, IHEs on average seem to be adequately ensuring that scholars do not exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance. However, despite the reasonably strong performance of grantees on this measure, the Department believes that this measure is essential to maintain to ensure that grantees continue to maintain high standards when recruiting scholars.

Measure: Percentage of degree/certification recipients who are working in the area(s) for which they are trained upon program completion.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	78	69
2009	78	77
2010	81	
2011	84	
2012	84	
2013	85	

Additional Information: Grantees submit data annually through the PPD Web-based data collection. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of degree and certification recipients who were working in the area(s) for which they received training at the completion of

the program (1,875 in fiscal year 2009) by all degree and certification recipients who were employed in their area of training (1,875 in 2009), recipients who were not employed in their area of training (230 in 2009), recipients for whom grantees did not know if they were employed upon program completion (185 in 2009), recipients who were not employed (142 in 2009), and recipients for whom employment data were missing (15 in 2009). Individuals who received only an endorsement are excluded from all calculations.

Approximately three-fourths of degree/certification recipients funded through this program work in the area for which they were trained upon graduation. However, it is difficult to determine the ultimate driver of this trend. The program has in place a service obligation requirement that mandates that degree recipients work in the field in which they were trained upon graduation or pay back the full amount of support received. Additionally, teaching assignments are not wholly at the discretion of the program's graduates, but are instead largely at the discretion of LEAs and schools that may opt to place a teacher in an assignment that is out of area. Given the continuing impacts of the recession, shrinking local and State government tax bases, and the increased number of teacher layoffs, we are likely to see a number of teachers placed "out-of-field" as LEAs attempt to cope with smaller numbers of personnel. With smaller local budgets and fewer LEAs hiring, program graduates may accept teaching positions outside of their field of training in order to secure employment with a view to transition to their area of expertise in a number of years. The Department is currently conducting a review to determine if those graduates who are not working in the area for which they were trained are employed in special education or if they are working in non-special education placements. The Department is also considering additional steps to ensure that grantees more effectively recruit and train students who will work in the area for which they received training; to improve training courses and curricula to ensure that graduates are competitive in the market; and to promote high quality residency programs that help graduates build relationships with LEAs and increase their competitiveness.

Measure: Percentage of degree/certification recipients who are working in the area(s) for which they are trained upon program completion and who are fully qualified under IDEA.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	72	65
2009	74	73
2010	77	
2011	80	
2012	83	
2013	83	

Additional Information: Grantees submit data annually through the PPD Web-based data collection. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of non-leadership degree recipients who were working in the area(s) for which they received training at the completion of the program and who are highly qualified (1,632 for fiscal year 2009) by all degree recipients who were employed, who were not employed, and for whom the employment status was not known, minus students working in positions for which the State does not have certification and licensure requirements (2,232 for 2009). Note that the population included in calculations for this measure differs from the population included in the previous measure. While the

denominator in the previous measure includes all students currently employed, not employed, and those for whom employment status was not known, the denominator here excludes students working in positions for which the State has no licensure or certification requirements. Additionally, scholars who received only an endorsement, as well as students who received leadership training, are excluded from all calculations because highly qualified status does not apply to these individuals.

As noted in the discussion of the previous measure, there are a number of reasons why degree/certification recipients funded through this program may not work in the area for which they were trained upon program completion. More importantly, the comparison of this measure to the previous one provides an important insight into the alignment of training programs supported under this program and the certification standards outlined in IDEA. Consistently, this measure has lagged behind the previous one by 4 to 5 percentage points, indicating that, even of those individuals who obtain employment in the area for which they were trained, a consistent subset do not meet the certification standards of the field despite program regulations that require program graduates to meet State certification and licensure standards. The Department is currently taking several steps to determine the full extent and cause of this shortfall and address it. Through updated data collection instruments employed in fiscal year 2011, the Department seeks to gather more information about the subset of scholars who do not meet State certification and licensure standards and the specific causes (e.g., not taking or failing State licensure exams, or a lack of appropriate coursework). In its grant application review process, the Department has provided greater direction to reviewers and applicants to ensure a more thorough review of course syllabi submitted by applicants to ensure that program funds are used to support high quality programs. Additionally, through the program's Preservice Training Improvement grants, the Department is providing support to a number of teacher and paraprofessional training programs to restructure their curricula to align with State standards for certification and accreditation.

Efficiency Measures

The Department established one efficiency measure for the Personnel Preparation program. This measure is:

Measure: The Federal cost per degree or certification program recipient working in the area(s) in which they were trained upon program completion.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	\$25,000	\$24,418
2009	25,000	27,398
2010	25,000	
2011	25,000	
2012	25,000	
2013	25,000	

Additional Information: This measure links directly to the program's annual performance measures, and should enable comparisons across grantees or sub-sets of similar grantees. The Department is currently working with a contractor to analyze grantee-level results to identify

high performing institutions that other grantees can look to as examples for improving program performance. Grantee-level data will also be used to compare the relative efficiency of program grantees, both in relation to one another as well as in relation to other Federal programs that provide graduate level scholarships.

The data used to calculate this measure come from the Department's PPD Web-based data collection. The cost per degree/certification program recipient is calculated for individual cohorts of grantees by dividing the sum of all project costs supported with Federal funds (across all years of each individual scholar's training) (\$72,961,033 in fiscal year 2009) by the number of degree recipients who successfully completed funded training programs closing in that year and who are fully qualified (2,663 in 2009). Given the historical trends in this measure, the Department believes that 2009 represents an outlier, but will be unable to confirm this belief until data from subsequent years are available.

Other Performance Information

At the end of fiscal year 2007, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) awarded a \$2.8 million, 4-year contract for the evaluation of the Personnel Development Program. The evaluation includes two separate components. The first is a study of IHEs that have applied for funds to train personnel under the program. This portion of the study is designed to: (1) collect descriptive data from all the funded and non-funded applicants to the FY 2006 and FY 2007 competitions (approximately 185 funded and 265 non-funded), and (2) document changes to the funded applicants' courses of study.

A Web survey of Project Directors was conducted in fall 2009 with items addressing the following elements of individual courses of study: (1) status; (2) focus; (3) entry and completion requirements; (4) grant support for students; (5) enrollment and completion information; (6) standardized exit exam scores; (7) allocation of Personnel Preparation program grant funds; (8) information about program completers, and (9) changes to the funded course of study since the time of the application. A sample of changes made to funded courses of study is currently being rated by an expert panel. These changes include: (1) syllabi and assessments from newly created or substantially modified courses; (2) materials documenting new training units, modules, or fieldwork; (3) new mentoring programs; and (4) curriculum vitae of new faculty members. Members of the expert panel will review the documents representing each change and rate the quality of those changes.

The second component of the evaluation is a study of the national centers funded under the program. This component of the evaluation is designed to: (1) document the products and services generated by the national centers; (2) produce a rough estimate of their costs; and (3) rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of a sample of those products and services. The study of the national centers will include all 12 of the centers funded between 2001 and 2008. Following initial telephone interviews with center staff, an inventory was completed by center staff that cataloged the cumulative accomplishments of each center. Data from the inventory of products and services served as the basis for selecting a sample of each center's products for review by an expert review panel, comprised of individuals with expertise relevant to the work of each center. Centers designated up to 10 percent of their products as *signature works*, which were sampled in a separate stratum. Once the products were sampled, center staff were asked to

provide descriptive information about each and to submit all available materials relevant to the sampled products or services. Three experts are currently reviewing each product or service for quality, relevance, and usefulness. The expected release date of the report is spring 2012.